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REVIEWS.

Transactions of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society for the year 1852 : Vol. II., Part I.

—DUBLIN, John O'Daly, 1853.

There is not in the United Kingdom a local association for literary or scientific purposes which prosecutes its useful labours with greater zeal, ability, or success, than the Kilkenny Archaeological Society. The very list of its members, filling *fourteen goodly pages* of large octavo, is a cheering sight to the eye of an antiquary. Very pleasant it is to behold such and so many names in the same catalogue, representing persons of every rank and section in the community, enrolled as fellow-labourers in the same cause, encouraging and assisting each other to unfold the ancient history of their common country, and acting up to the spirit of the admirable motto prefixed to these transactions,—“If any there bee which are desirous to be strangers in their owne soile and forrainers in their owne citie, they may soe continue, and therein flatter themselves. For such like I have not written these lines nor taken these paines.”* Former volumes have shown the ability of the gentlemen who have “taken the paines” to write such “lines” as no archaeologist would willingly see blotted out; and the present *fasciculus* fully sustains their reputation and that of the society. We regret that our space only allows room for a very brief enumeration of its contents.

First we have a paper “on the Ancient Tapestry of Kilkenny Castle,” from the pen of the Rev. James Graves; which gives all that can be gleaned of the history of these curious works of art, and must have been extremely interesting to the society before which it was read; though we must regret the want of illustrative drawings and detailed descriptions, which would have increased the value of the paper to the general Archaeologist.

The next paper is an “Authentic Account of the Death of Wallenstein, with a Vindication of the Motives of Colonel Walter Butler,” by Francis Prendergast, Esq. As a careful exposition of the facts of the extraordinary case to which it relates, we hold this essay in high estimation. It goes a great way to prove that Wallenstein deserved a traitor’s doom; and it establishes, beyond all dispute or question, the cowardice, meanness, and falsehood, of the Emperor Ferdinand II., and his court. But it can scarcely be said to vindicate the motives of Butler, and the other assassins of Wallenstein. True, Mr. Prendergast shows that they were not urged on to slay their chief by the immediate *promise* of reward; but, he also shows that no imperial proclamation, or other legal act, had doomed Wallenstein to die: and thus removes almost the only semblance of excuse which could be pleaded for the bloody deed. He farther admits that Wallenstein fell an *unresisting* victim, under

* Camden.

the partisan of Geraldine. The slaying of him, when it would have been so easy to have made him prisoner and brought him before the tribunals, was therefore a piece of gratuitous villainy. We cannot but regard it as a foul murder. The actors in it were a parcel of Irish and Scottish soldiers of fortune, serving under Wallenstein's command. Butler showed no care for his own reputation, by accepting rewards which can only be regarded as *the price of blood*. He was "made a Count, and an Imperial Chamberlain; and received a golden chain, and several of Terzka's estates." (Terzka was one of Wallenstein's officers, who refused to join in the conspiracy against his leader, and was slain with, or rather before him, *at an entertainment to which he had been invited for the purpose* :) "and he married a Countess Phondana; by whom, on his death soon after, he was interred with great pomp at Prague:"—where all who wish well to his memory will let him lie undisturbed.

The next communication, by Mr. O'Kearney, on "Folk-lore," is justly characterized by its author, as one which "invents a system of worship for our ancestors *on the slightest possible evidence*:" but we willingly allow him the benefit of his apology, that "he is not singular in this respect."—We hasten to an admirable paper "on the Rock Monuments of the County of Dublin," by Henry O'Neill, Esq.—Mr. O'Neill is evidently no mere book-antiquary; he has seen, drawn, and measured, the structures which he describes, and well understands their significance and value. The following remarks are worthy of a corner in every Archæologist's memory.

"These remains are known in the County of Dublin by the name of *Druids' Altars*; sometimes, but rarely, by that of *Cromleac*. In examining this, or any similar topic, the investigation must be conducted irrespectively of any name, which is often but the expression of some olden theory, lost to literature, but preserved orally. Any one who has attended to the way in which the peasantry catch up the stray opinions of learned disquisitionists, will see the truth of this observation, and estimate its value. * * * How little regard is to be paid to mere names, may be known from the fact, that, besides the two very opposite ones, of *Cromleacs* and *Druids' Altars*, by which they are known in the County of Dublin, similar monuments have various other names in other localities: for instance, in the County Kilkenny, one is called "*the stone of the Champion*," another "*the Goat's Stone*," another "*the Ass's Manger*:"—names purely local, and indicating no opinion as to any common object which their founders may have had in erecting them."—P. 40.

And the Editor of the Transactions remarks in a Note:—

"The appellation *Cromleac* is never applied to the primitive rock-monuments of this country by the unsophisticated amongst the Irish peasantry. By them they are almost universally termed *Leaba*, "beds" or "graves:"—or *Leac*, "stones" of memorial. The word *Cromleac* was introduced from Wales, by Vallancey and his school; and when merely used as a conventional term is unobjectionable. The name *Druids' Altar*, is founded on the baseless theory entertained by some writers, that these structures served as altars for the human sacrifices said to have been offered by the Druids to the Pagan deities of Ireland; and should be studiously avoided."

The rock-built tombs now existing and visible in the County of Dublin, (no doubt many are yet hidden under *tumuli*), are seven; and are found at Howth, Shanganagh, Brennanstown, Kiltarnan, Mount Venus, Glencullin, (this was discovered by Mr. O'Neill himself,) and the Phoenix Park. Of all these we have drawings, accompanied by exact measurements and accurate descriptions. This paper will henceforth be referred to as *the authority* on the subject. Viewing it in this light, we have only to regret that the author has contented himself with referring to the *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. I., pp. 189—90, for an account of the Knock-Mary tomb, in the Phoenix

Park, more ample than his own. We can understand his reluctance to swell his paper with details which are already in print; but on such a point everything is of interest: and many may see the Transactions of the Kilkenny Society who may not have it in their power to consult those of the Academy. His own description is extremely good, and the illustrative drawings beautiful.

We must pass over with brief notice, a paper "on Ancient Irish Bells," by T. L. Cooke, Esq., who is possessor of no fewer than seven of these curious and interesting reliques:—the bells of St. Molua, St. Cummin, St. Camin, and St. Ruadhan; a small one (of bronze) found in Scattery Island, near the mouth of the Shannon; with the *Barnan Coulawon* or bell of St. Culanus; and the bell of Kilshanny, otherwise called that of St. Cuana. The writer referring to the term "Barnan," applied to several Ecclesiastical Bells, and which signifies "a little gap," mentions only two to which he is aware of the epithet being prefixed, the Barnan Coulawon, and the Barnan Evin; Coulawon (Culan) and Evin being the names of two saints. He gives an explanation of the term different from the one proposed by Dr. Petrie; considering it as descriptive,—not of an accidental fracture—but of "a little gap," intentionally left in the protecting casing, "for the person swearing on the bell to introduce his thumb by." This may be correct; but we may mention that, in the Great Exhibition of Irish Antiquities, at Belfast, in 1852, during the Meeting of the British Association, amongst a large number of ancient Irish Bells, there was one called the "Barnan Brighde," or "Gapped Bell of St. Bridget," which had a fracture on one side; and that the tradition representing it states that this injury was caused by the bell being thrown violently by the Saint on a certain occasion, to disperse a body of evil spirits. [See *Descriptive Catalogue of the Belfast Exhibition*, Appendix, p. 12.]—We have next a historical paper "on the Cross-legged Effigies of the County of Kilkenny," by Mr. Graves; who has laudably exerted himself in preserving from destruction several of the monuments which he describes and ably illustrates:—then, an essay by Mr. Cooke "on an Ancient Irish Boat;"—and one by Mr. Graves, "on the Ancient Fabrick, Plate, and Furniture, of the Cathedral of Christ Church, Waterford."—This is succeeded by a memoir "on the Local Antiquities of Buttevant, in the County of Cork," by R. R. Brash, Esq., who has taken considerable pains in repairing and restoring the remains of the Abbey Church of the Franciscan Convent in that town, so as to arrest the progress of destruction and decay.—We are next presented with a paper "on Folk-lore," by Mr. P. Cody, and one by Mr. Prim, "on the Family of Cowley, of Kilkenny,"—with which it is well known the noble house of Wellesley is genealogically connected;—and with "Architectural Notes on Kilkenny Castle," by Mr. J. G. Robertson, Architect, who superintended the recent repair of that building, the noble baronial residence of the "*gens inclyta Butlerorum*."

These are succeeded by one of the most archæologically curious and interesting papers in the volume:—"Notes" by Mr. Prim, "on the excavation of a Rath, at Dunbel, in the County of Kilkenny:"—"a circular earth-work, having concentric ramparts and fosses," which has lately been trenched for agricultural purposes; and in which many objects have been discovered, showing that

the Rath was once, and probably for many generations, used as a dwelling-place; and throwing much light on the condition of its inhabitants. Enormous quantities of the bones of animals were everywhere met with;—the remains of red and fallow-deer, oxen, (*the bos longifrons*), horses, swine, and domestic fowl, being manifestly the remains of animals which had for centuries been slaughtered for the food of the inhabitants of the Rath. No human bones were discovered. The cooking-places were also found;—*round pits in the earth*, about a foot and a half in diameter, and two feet deep,—quite full of charcoal, burnt stones, and calcined bones. Slags, or clinkers, were dug up; showing that the inhabitants had forged the rude implements of iron, of which fragments were found in the Rath. Querns, hones, and sharpening-stones; piles of round pebbles, evidently intended for sling-stones; —“fairy mill-stones” in the incipient stage of their formation; a child’s toy of stone, some fragments of “Kimmeridge coal-money,” and a stone button without the shank, were also discovered: together with pins, a piercer, beads, combs, and a knife-handle, all of bone. One of the combs had its connecting strips rivetted with iron. Bronze pins, and two fibulæ of the same metal were dug up; and a *small square iron bell*, (the bearing of this discovery on our ecclesiastical antiquities we need not point out), iron fibulæ, a javelin-head, several knife-blades, (of which one was only in the process of formation, showing that they were forged on the spot), a goad, chisel, reaping-hook, horse-shoe, and various other articles of the same material; together with many pieces of coarse pottery, *both baked and glazed*, which had formed portions of the household utensils of the dwellers in the Rath. Lastly were found a halfpenny of William and Mary, 1692, a soldier’s button, of brass, of the same date, apparently; a tradesman’s token, issued by John Beaver, of Kilkenny, about the same period; and a brass ear-ring of the fashion of the last century. These last, of course, are modern deposits.

Next we have “Gleanings from Country Church Yards,” by Mr. Hitchcock, who is always original and interesting; though we think we could help him to better interpretations than he has adopted for some of the inscriptions he has copied; and a curious paper by the same gentleman on “Dingle in the Sixteenth Century.”—After a memoir by Mr. Prendergast “on Hawks, and Hounds in Ireland,” the volume is closed by two notices of “Kilkenny Tradesmen’s Tokens,” from the pens of Dr. Aquilla Smith, of Dublin, and Mr. Prim, the Secretary of the Society; who have laudably and successfully co-operated in elucidating a point which is of more importance to the history of commerce and society than might at first sight appear.

No Table of Contents is given with the volume (or portion of a volume) now issued; an omission which is unusual, but which will, no doubt, be supplied in the portion yet to appear. This, however, is of less importance than a copious *Index*, which we hope the Society proposes giving with each volume. Works on Archæology, of all others, require a minute and easy reference to names; and in most modern publications of the kind this is carefully attended to.

We have now given a rapid and imperfect sketch of the contents of these Transactions: enough, we hope, to show their value to the Archæologists of our common country, and to recommend the

Society, from which such papers emanate, to the support of all who have it in their power to promote its objects. We heartily wish it success.

Sigilla Ecclesiæ Hibernicæ Illustrata.—*The Episcopal and Capitular Seals of the Irish Cathedral Churches Illustrated.*—By RICHARD CAULFIELD, A.B., Trin. Col. Dublin. Part II., Waterford, Lismore, and Cork.—DUBLIN, M^cGlashan, 1854.

We had some time since the pleasure of noticing the first portion of this curious and interesting work : (*See Ulst. Journ. Archæol.*, I., p. 94) it is now our agreeable duty to recommend the second part to the attention of our readers. It appears to be fully equal to its predecessor in point of accuracy, and superior to it in the quantity of historical and miscellaneous information which it contains. The study of seals may appear to some persons a frivolous occupation ; but the careful investigator of history will view it in a very different light. He knows that by their aid he is often able to test the accuracy of pretended deeds and charters ; to detect the spurious, and authenticate the genuine ; and, thereby to ascertain historical facts, which would otherwise remain doubtful, or be erroneously understood. He knows that by their aid he can often trace the succession of prelates, deans, and other ecclesiastical dignitaries, and thus complete the history of many ancient churches and cathedrals, which would without them remain imperfect. He knows that they often give pictorial representations, by which the state of the ancient ecclesiastical buildings may be traced from age to age ; as well as the vestments of the clergy, the ecclesiastical *suppellex*, and some points connected with the ritual of the sacred offices ; and, he knows that the seals, by their form and style of execution, are frequently in themselves authentic documents of the condition of the arts of design at the time when they were engraved. In all these respects, curious facts may be ascertained or verified from Mr. Caulfield's publication. We add, that he performs more than his title-page promises ; as he gives not only the Episcopal and Capitular Seals, but the seals of the *Deanery* and *Archdeaconry*, in several cases ; and, in *all*, the *Verge* of each cathedral church ; and the ancient *Crozier* of the See, if it be in existence.
